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AUTHOR Mitchell, Rowland L., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

This report describes the nature and scope of a national survey of language and area programs in the United States of America in 1968-69. An analysis of the various programs or a typology of programs was developed by taking each of the characteristics of the overall program--its area and language courses, and its faculty--and cross-tabulating them with factors such as the university setting, size and location of the program, a general qualitative ranking reflected in the annual competition for funds and fellowships, and measures of effectiveness in terms of written product, output of students in various disciplines, at various levels, and with various degrees of language competence. Language or area courses were also treated separately from their institutional setting. Grouped by discipline, they were combined into a national sample to give a cross-sectional look at the nature of language and the area instruction available for various kinds of specialization. The area studies in the report are classified into seven categories: (1) Africa south of the Sahara, (2) East Asia, (3) Eastern Europe, (4) Latin America, (5) Near and Middle East, (6) South Asia, and (7) Southeast Asia. The report discusses the plan of the study and the collection of the data, the analysis of the data and distribution of the study, and future plans. The data on which the study is based are stored on magnetic tape at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Institute of International Studies at the Office of Education. (RL)

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Rowland L. Mitchell, Jr.
Social Science Research Council
230 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10017

A STUDY OF LANGUAGE AND AREA PROGRAMS

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THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE AND AREA PROGRAMS

I. The Plan of the Study and Collection of the Data

The Social Science Research Council instituted this Study in 1968 in accordance with a request of the U.S. Office of Education. The director of the project was Professor Richard D. Lambert, University of Pennsylvania, who took leave from his teaching duties for part of two years to devote full time to the Study.

The Study was originally planned to proceed in two stages. During the first 15 months intensive case studies were to be made of a limited number of centers concerned with two world areas--the Soviet Union and Slavic countries, and Africa south of the Sahara. It was expected that analysis of the findings in these studies and experience with design developed during them would indicate desirability of proceeding with more extensive collection of data on a much larger set of programs and their products. Early in the Study it became clear that far less time would be required for the first stage than anticipated and that to visit only one or two centers on each campus would be a wasteful expenditure of time and effort. Hence it was decided to expand the scope of the Study and to collect a broad range of data for all area centers on each campus. This change in plans necessitated further negotiations for funds; and in June 1969 the contract with the USOE was extended through June 1970 and suitable provision made for the added costs of the expanded Study. This schedule had to be further revised when there was a delay of over three months in clearance by the USOE and Bureau of the Budget of the questionnaires prepared for use in the project. No changes were required in the questionnaires, but the delay meant that they were not printed and ready for mailing until February 1970 rather than in October as had been expected. Further delays in processing the data occurred in 1970-71, and it was not until the summer of 1971 that intensive analysis of the data could begin. In the meantime, further funding had been sought from the Office of Education, in the summer of 1970 and in the spring of 1971, and supplements were granted on both occasions. The final one required not only that the Council forgo some overhead but contribute from its own resources a sum of at least $13,879, which was done.

To assist in the completion of the Study, the National Endowment for the Humanities also contributed support, in part with a matching grant from the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation.

Data for the Study were collected about three major categories: university programs, characteristics of individual faculty members, and former and current students. Since the Study written by Dr. Lambert is based almost entirely on the data collected about these categories, each is treated separately below.

1. UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

The first part of the study was a survey of various aspects of individual university programs. A lengthy list of characteristics of individual language or area studies programs was drawn up, and for each one an appropriate coding system for punch card entry was devised. For each center there were separate punch codes on (1) the over-all organization of the program; (2) scholarly characteristics of the faculty; (3) the focus and the scope of the area part of the curriculum as a whole; and (4) of each individual area course; (5) analysis of the language part of the curriculum as a whole; and (6) of each language taught; and (7) the characteristics and academic experience of the students enrolled in the program. Much of this information was made available by the USOE from reports of the NDEA centers and applications for NDEA Title VI fellowships.

An analysis of the various programs or a typology of programs was developed by taking each of the characteristics of the over-all program, its area and language courses, and its faculty, and cross-tabulating them with such things as the university setting, the size and location of the program, a general qualitative ranking reflected in the annual competition for funds and fellowships, and measures of effectiveness in terms of written product, output of students in various disciplines, at various levels, and with various degrees of language competence.

In addition, language or area courses were treated separately from their institutional setting. Grouped by discipline they were combined into a national sample to give a cross-sectional look at the nature of language and area instruction available for various kinds of specialization.

The interview schedule derived from this typology, and used by Dr. Lambert in his visits to 59 programs in 1968-69 was converted into a questionnaire which, when cleared by USOE and the Bureau of the Budget, was mailed to the directors of 653 university and college programs. Attached was a request for a list of the students currently enrolled, for a list of the recipients of M.A. and Ph.D. degrees between 1956 and 1966, and in 1969, and for information from their transcripts concerning the students' language and area studies training.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBERS

While the analysis of programs viewed area studies essentially as organized university instructional programs which have a minimal cluster of language and area faculty specialists, a substantial portion of the teaching and research about an area is carried on by individual scholars who may be neither specialists nor associated with an organized program. For many purposes, area studies are better viewed as a congeries of individual scholars rather than as a set of programmatic units.

An attempt was made to distinguish several degrees of area specialization among the faculty in organized programs, on the basis of four criteria: whether the scholar was reported to spend 50 percent or more of his time in a language and area program, whether 50 percent of his recent publications were concerned with the area, whether he showed evidence of having used the language of the area in his research or teaching, and whether he taught a course which specifies the area as part of its title. A preliminary check showed that these measures were highly intercorrelated, and depending on the world area or discipline, identifying those faculty members who could meet two or three out of these four criteria would distinguish what most would consider the "core faculty" of a language or area studies program. A comparison of the qualifications related to teaching, research, or career level of the "core faculty" with other members listed with the area studies programs was made on the basis of full curriculum vitae collected from each member of the relevant faculty in the course of the interviews conducted by Dr. Lambert.

Information on those scholars outside the organized program was also gathered through a more generally distributed questionnaire. On February 6, 1969 a meeting was held in New York of representatives of the Association for Asian Studies, the African Studies Association, the Latin American Studies Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and the Middle East Association. At this meeting a strategy for a joint survey of their membership was worked out, to cover questions of special interest to the Associations themselves as well as a broader range of information of use in the review and in the future planning of area studies in the United States. The Association for Asian Studies undertook to act as fiscal agent for this survey, on behalf of the other Associations. Dr. Lambert assisted the AAS in planning the survey and had access to the data collected.

Questionnaires, when cleared, were mailed to all members of these associations as well as to all other faculty members listed in applications for NDEA Title VI fellowships from departments that gave graduate degrees, as having published one or more scholarly articles on a non-Western area. Returned questionnaires were sent to the respective area association offices, checked for completeness, and sent to the office of the Association for Asian Studies for processing. Returns of up to 50 percent of the members were reported by the associations.

3. STUDENTS

Some of the indicators of the success of an area studies program are the quality of the students it draws, the training it gives them, and the further careers and contributions of its graduates. There was available a considerable amount of information about some individual students, particularly in applications for national scholarships. The use of these

data, however, suffered from either or both of two limitations: they were a sample (usually by definition an unrepresentatively superior one) drawn from an unknown universe; and data were given for single years. Data about any single student over the years of his academic career are rarely found, but rather a cross-section of all students at a particular point in time. The first limitation makes it difficult to speak of the recruitment and training of typical vs. highly selected area students, and the second difficulty makes it impossible to know what the finished product has actually been through, rather than what a cross-section is doing this year. One consequence is that little has been know about how the training of an area student differs from that of other students and about the gap between statements of the ideal training sequence laid out for students and what they, in fact, take.

A list of persons who were considered to have had significant training for area specialization and who received Ph.D. degrees in 1957, 1958, 1967, and 1968 was assembled. A two-year period was used to control the bias of a single year, and the earlier years were chosen to give a base line before the infusion of NDEA funds in 1959. By taking those who had completed their training, instead of a cross-section of current students, the size of the sample was reduced, and questions about the comparability of data drawn from students at graduate school levels were obviated.

The area program provided the names of their graduates, their disciplines, dissertation topics, principal advisers, records of their courses, and their current addresses. From the students themselves it was possible to gain by questionnaire a retrospective look at the programs in which they studied, the reasons for their entering area studies, and their hindsight judgments of their training and the process of their placement in the job market with special emphasis on the use of their training.

In addition to the retrospective sample of past graduates, which caught only survivals of the process, a cohort of all students entering each area studies program in 1960 was examined. Checking the present status of this cohort gave some indication of the length of required training and, in particular, the amount of and perhaps the reasons for the loss of students who enter language and area training.

The survey of students proceeded in two phases. In 1969 an attempt was made to elicit from the various area programs during site visits and by means of a mailed questionnaire a list of students in the various graduating and entering cohorts. In 1970 questionnaires were mailed to each of the several categories of students mentioned above.

II. The Analysis of the Data and Distribution of the Study

During the fall of 1970 and the winter of 1970-71, the data from the survey, the NDEA center applications, and the questionnaires were coded for machine processing and put on magnetic tapes so that they could be analyzed. By the summer of 1971 this task had been largely completed and writing of a first draft of the Study had begun. Late in August four chapters had been completed as well as parts of two others. These were reviewed by the Social Science Research Council Committee on Area and Language Programs Review, appointed in 1968 to be advisory to Richard Lambert. Its members were Robert E. Ward, University of Michigan, Chairman; Morroe Berger, Princeton University; L. Gray Cowan, State University of New York at Albany; Alexander Eckstein, University of Michigan; John W. Hall, Yale University; Edgar Polomé, University of Texas at Austin; Irwin T. Sanders, Boston University; Stanley J. Stein, Princeton University; John M. Thompson, Indiana University.

Following this meeting these chapters were circulated to over 130 scholars and others who had been invited to participate in a "National Conference on Foreign Language and Area Study and World Affairs: An Assessment." This conference, held on September 9-10, 1971, in Philadelphia, was funded by the U.S. Office of Education through the South Asia Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The Study was used at this conference to provide the factual information needed for assessment and planning.

Throughout the fall of 1971 and the winter and spring of 1972, writing continued and as Dr. Lambert completed each chapter it was circulated to those who had participated in the Philadelphia conference and to a growing list of other scholars, government officials, and foundation officers who wished to have access to the Study for purposes of planning. One copy is included with this Report.

As completed, the manuscript consists of 8 chapters: I, Introduction; II, The Samples; III, Specialists; IV Area Courses; V, Language Instruction; VI, The Programs; VII, Student Specialists; VIII, Conclusions and Recommendations. (In draft, the last chapter was numbered IX because a Chapter VIII on the roles of the six area studies associations was planned. It was subsequently decided not to include such a chapter in view of the possibility of separate publication of the reports prepared for the Study by six authors under the contract with the Association for Asian Studies. An earlier plan to include a tenth chapter on the impact on the disciplines of the publication of research by area specialists had been shelved because of the difficulty of assembling the data that would have been needed to produce findings on a level of reliability commensurate with the findings in the rest of the Study.)

The Study itself is concerned for the most part with aggregates. Dr. Lambert divides area studies into seven categories: Africa south of the Sahara; East Asia; Eastern Europe; Latin America; Near and Middle East; South Asia; and Southeast Asia. Only occasionally does the Study particularize in terms of individual countries. Data for many of the individual countries were collected, of course, but the Study would have been impossibly long and detailed if area aggregates had not been the units for analysis. One scholar has made use of the project tapes at the University of Pennsylvania to disaggregate data for Japan from the East Asian category, with satisfactory results, and it may be expected that other scholars may wish to use the data for similar or other research purposes.

III. Future Plans

In July 1972, the SSRC advisory committee met to review the completed first draft of the manuscript and the recommendations in the final chapter. It recommended that the manuscript be edited for publication as soon as possible. Dr. Lambert reported that the American Academy of Political and Social Science would be able to produce a paperbound volume speedily and inexpensively, and the committee urged him to explore this possibility further.

The committee also urged that a summary of the manuscript, about 30 pages long, be prepared so that the major findings could be made widely available to scholars, government officials, educators, and foundation officials. At the time of the writing of this Report, an editor had been found for the manuscript and a first draft of the summary had been prepared.

As noted, a Study as comprehensive as this one generates data much more extensive than could be used in a single review. These data are on 5 computer tapes, at the University of Pennsylvania. Copies of the tapes, along with the numerical code books, have also been deposited with the Institute of International Studies at the U.S. Office of Education. They are a very valuable data source and it is hoped they can be utilized by other scholars.